

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

June 2016

We provide professional, efficient services to create a lifetime positive difference for our Community.

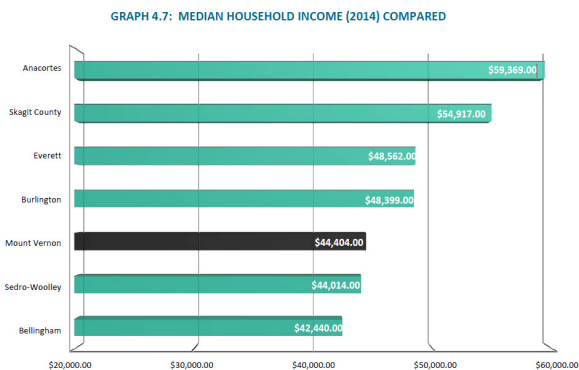
Comprehensive Planning and Housing

Municipalities plan for growth through a comprehensive planning process mandated by the State of Washington. The City of Mount Vernon is currently updating a previous plan and introducing new policies to appropriately address contemporary issues brought forward by public input. Projecting housing needs for all income levels is a crucial and complex balancing act that challenges jurisdictions large and small. Economically strong cities also focus on adding living wage jobs to combat the housing needs, elevating household incomes to provide prosperity for all.



Elements of the Comprehensive Plan
View the entire planning process, draft elements, public participation, and comments at www.mountvernonwa.gov

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers a household paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing as “cost burdened.” Housing is affordable when a household, after paying their rent or mortgage payment and basic utilities, has enough income left to pay for other necessities like transportation, food, medical care, and other such essentials.



The City of Mount Vernon's median household income is \$44,404 according to the U.S. Census. Using these data sets we can show that out of the City's 12,711 existing homes, 54% of City households could be considered cost burdened according to the Federal government definition.

Affordable housing should never mean overly dense housing, poor quality housing or segregated neighborhoods. Nor does it mean simply “public housing,” but a variety of homes for the middle class, working poor, young families, and senior citizens.

Policy decisions should be made without special interest influence and with great focus on the next generation of City residents.

Please read the draft documents available online! For example, a proposed policy from our 2016 Comprehensive plan update states:

6.4.1: INCOME & JOB CREATION Promote Mixed Use Neighborhoods (page 81-82): Encouraging the creation of mixed-use areas characterized by living wage jobs, mixed income housing, and amenities such as parks, grocery stores and schools all within a walkable urban context. Properly located mixed-use areas have well designed streets that welcome pedestrian activity, they have community focal points and meeting places like parks and trails, and the nonresidential uses are compatible with homes that will be in close proximity.

Mayor's Coffee Hour

Saturday, June 25, 10:00 - 11:00 am
Meet at Mount Vernon Farmers Market Information Booth and walk along the Skagit Riverwalk

Friday, July 8, 10:00 - 11:00 am
Mount Vernon City Hall, 2nd Floor
910 Cleveland Avenue



Visit www.mountvernonwa.gov and click on “Notify Me” to sign up for various City newsletters and notifications

“Food for Thought, Food for Life”

Thursday, June 30, 7pm
Lincoln Theatre
712 S 1st Street

Join us for the last event of the Mayor's Wellness Challenge - a free showing of this 20-minute film that explains the downsides of current agribusiness practices and introduces us to farmers, chefs, researchers, educators, and advocates who are providing solutions.

Fabulous 4th of July

Monday, July 4
Edgewater Park
600 Behrens-Millett Road

Music, food and fireworks...a good time for the entire family! Bring your own food and BBQ or try one of our tasty food vendors. Music begins with local bands at 7pm, the headliner at 9pm, and fireworks at dark. Don't forget your lawn chair or blanket and a flashlight to help when leaving the show.

Riverwalk Summer Concert Series - Chris Eger Band & the Powerhouse Horns

Thursday, July 7, 6pm
Riverwalk Plaza

Join us for the first concert in a series of free concerts that will be held on the Riverwalk Plaza every Thursday night through September 1. The two-hour concerts will feature a mix of family-friendly local and regional artists. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the show!

Mayor Jill Boudreau
910 Cleveland Avenue
P.O. Box 809
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

360.336.6211
www.mountvernonwa.gov



Homelessness and Vagrancy Actions

As it is with most Cities across the Country, we face a growing homeless population with little to no shelter beds available. At first blush it may seem that placing homeless people in shelters is the least expensive and most ideal solution. However, research shows that an approach that prioritizes **finding permanent**

supportive housing for the homeless, versus providing shelters, is much more cost-effective and successful over the long term. This is primarily due to the following:

- 1) **the enormous cost of hospitalization and medical treatment that is exacerbated when homeless**
- 2) **many homeless individuals end up in prisons and jails, which is very pricey**
- 3) **emergency shelters are expensive to both build and operate**

For the past 8 months, City Hall has been **actively engaged in supportive housing discussions** in a proud partnership with Ms. Jennifer Johnson and the Skagit County Public Health Department. We hope to solidify a plan with trusted non-profit developers this year to propose a permanent supportive housing project for State funding in early 2017.

In relation to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process, the following proposed policy states:

- Policy HO-5.1.3 (page 91): Support the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach to the prevention, transition, and stabilization of the homeless. Programs and services that decrease potential homelessness, stop recurring homelessness, and to promote long-term self sufficiency should be encouraged.

On June 22, 2016, City Council is expected to take action in an agreement with Skagit County Public Health to create **an innovative 2-year pilot project partnership** with the Mount Vernon Police Department.

The City will hire a **licensed social worker that will embed with public safety personnel** to work directly with homeless individuals on our city streets.

The goal of the Program is to provide an alternative police response through *outreach to, and engagement of, homeless individuals with behavioral health disorders* (mental and/or substance use disorders); and to *connect them with available local services*.

To watch a short video about the City's plans, please go to www.mountvernonwa.gov, click on "Video Center" on the left side of the screen, and then click on the video "Street Homelessness and Vagrancy".

